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DOMINION ELECTION.

CAMPAIGN OF 1886.

Hon. Edward Blake's Speeches.

No. 5 (First Series).

(OWEN SOUND)—Principles of Liberalism—Duty of the Leader.

(WELLAND)—Policy of the Party—Functions of an Opposition.

(OAKWOOD)—Sir J. Macdonald on Functions of an Opposition.

NOTE.—See Inside Cover for List of Mr. Blake's Speeches in first Series. Apply to W. T. R. Preston, Reform Club, Toronto, for Copies of these Speeches.

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LIST OF SPEECHES IN THIS SERIES.

- No. 1.—(LONDON): General Review of Situation. Riel Question.
(OWEN SOUND): North-West Maladministration. Riel.
- No. 2.—(BEAVERTON): Indemnity of Parliament. The Boodle Brigade.
- No. 3.—(CHESLE.): Public Finances—Taxation and Deficits—Farmers.
- No. 4.—(SIMCOE): Federal and Provincial Rights—Ontario—Nova Scotia.
(GUELPH)—Elections near.—Tory Dodges—Nova Scotia.
- No. 5.—(OWEN SOUND): Principles of Liberalism—Duty of the Leader.
(WELLAND)—Policy of the Party—Functions of an Opposition.
(OAKWOOD)—Sir J. Macdonald on Functions of an Opposition.
- No. 6.—*Extracts*—(GUELPH): Home Rule for Ireland.
(BERLIN): Firebrand Tory attempts to excite Germans.
(GALT & ORANGEVILLE): Indian Starvation Policy.
(PEMBROKE): Maladministration felt at Cut Knife Hill.
- No. 7.—*Extracts*—(KENDALL): Business Methods required in Public Affairs
—Degradation of Parliament—A few Boodlers.
(HAMPTON): Civil Service Reform.
(GALT): Burden of Public Debt.
(ORANGEVILLE): Burden of Public Debt.
(BELLEVILLE): Burden of Public Debt—The Interest on Debt.
(OAKWOOD): Burden of Public Debt—Our Public Expenditure.
- No. 8.—(NEWCASTLE): Canadian Pacific Railroad Matters.
(LISTOWEL): Canadian Pacific Railroad Matters—The last Sacrifice of \$10,000,000—Collapse of Tory "Boom" Policy.
(ST. THOMAS): North-West Lands.
(HUNTSVILLE): R.R. Policy—Sir John's Subsidies to "Guinea-Pig" Directors—Assisted Immigration and Railway Frauds.
(PARRY SOUND): Railway Policy of Liberals.
(ORANGEVILLE): Railway Policy of Liberals.
(BRANTFORD): The Kansas Slander.
(LISTOWEL): The Sea of Mountains.
- No. 9.—(WINGHAM): Blake's Tribute to Mackenzie.
(STAYNER): Blake's Tribute to Sir Richard Cartwright.
(BRANTFORD): Blake's Tribute to Paterson—Duty of Young Men.
- No. 10.—(WELLAND): Liberal Party, Creeds and Classes.
(ORILLIA): Leaders and Newspapers—The "Mail" Crusade.
- No. 11.—(AYLMER): Prohibition and Politics.
- No. 12.—(TORONTO): Interests of Labour—The Tariff.
(WELLAND): To Knights of Labour.
(BELLEVILLE): Legislation for Labour.
(DESERONTO): Workingmen and Parties.
(HAMILTON): Workingmen and Parties.
- No. 13.—(HAMILTON): Provincial Issues—The Religious Cry—Liberals and Catholics.
- No. 14.—(LINDSAY): North-West Affairs—Neglect, Delay and Mismanagement—Race and Creed Cries.

SPEECH TO YOUNG LIBERALS, Owen Sound.

'CLASS DISTINCTIONS.

**Changes, Improvements and Reforms—Reform of the
Senate—Assisted Immigration—Manhood Suffrage.**

THE TEMPERANCE QUESTION.

THE DUTY OF THE LEADER.

When Mr. Blake's health was proposed by the Chairman, his name was greeted by the Young Liberals with enthusiastic cheers, after which they sang "For he's a jolly good fellow, which nobody can deny."

Hon. EDWARD BLAKE rose to respond, his rising being a signal for a prolonged renewal of the cheering.

He said :—Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, you may say "He's a jolly good fellow," but to say that nobody can deny it, shows that you don't read the Tory newspapers—(cheers and laughter)—because you will find it denied by them constantly, so often, in fact, that I am obliged to believe they must be right in that particular myself. (Cries of no, no, laughter and applause.) I am very grateful to you for the honour you have done me on this the first visit it has been my happiness to make to this locality, in inviting me to a demonstration so important as the present, the largest I have ever seen in any of the outlying portions of our Province. (Loud applause.) I am grateful, also, for the marks of kindness, confidence and affection which have been showered upon me since I came amongst you. We public men, among the difficulties, embarrassments, and discouragements we must encounter in the course of our careers, are glad to feel, as we often are permitted to feel in the midst of the conflict, that Reformers here and Reformers elsewhere hold up our hands in the fight for the right, the fight for the advancement of the ruling and underlying principles of Liberalism. We are glad to know, as occasions of this kind from time to time demonstrate to us, that there are many of our fellow-citizens to all appearance quite engrossed in the ordi-

nary vocations of life, who yet regard with an anxious eye, and follow with an attentive ear, the proceedings of the public men in whom they confide, who feel a genuine interest in the struggle, and who are resolved to stand by their leaders, although the contest may sometimes seem long and arduous, and the period of success remote. It is not so, I trust, with us, to-day. (Cheers.)

We have had a time of severe and arduous struggle; we have had a season of gloom and darkness; but I trust **THE DAY IS BREAKING AND THE SOUNDS** of an aroused public spirit **ARE BECOMING AUDIBLE NOT MERELY IN THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO, BUT IN THE OTHER PROVINCES OF THE DOMINION.** (Renewed Cheers.) I hope for it, not for the sake of the Reform party, but for the sake of those principles of which the Reform party is at this moment the standard-bearer and exponent, and whose early success is essential to the restoration and the improvement of the material condition of our country; and to the recovery and maintenance of its moral standing, of its respectability, its purity, its integrity. (Loud applause.) Ours is

A DEMOCRATIC COUNTRY

in an age of Democracy. We here, if any people, enjoy, at least in theory, what is called the reign of the common people. But the reign of the common people, that is to say, the right of the masses of mankind to govern themselves, requires on the part of those who govern, an earnest discharge of those duties, which are necessarily involved in the privileges which they enjoy. As I have said to other audiences, so I say to you: in politics as in other things, power and privilege bring with them an inevitable load of responsibility and duty, and we cannot hope to succeed in the noble task of self-government, unless each one of us, realizing this, shall do his duty in the situation which he occupies, and shall, within the sphere of his powers and influence, labour to promote the accomplishment of sound reforms in their due season. Now, in this Democratic country we have but few, and I wish we HAD NO EXAMPLES OF THE CLASS DISTINCTIONS OF THE OLD WORLD. I think they ought not to have been introduced. They are foreign to our soil; they are unsuited to our habits; they are relics of old times now past; they are not given under the advice of our own leaders of opinion; and I wish it might become part of our unwritten code, that these exotic distinctions should not be by us received. (Cheers.) Yet, sir, I am a believer in a certain, and in a real sense, in the principle of aristocracy. I believe in the true aristocracy of energy, learning, ability, and integrity; an aristocracy whose marks and titles are found in the earnest efforts of a man to do his duty and to excel in its discharge; and whose distinctions are such as a free people themselves confer by the expression of their confi-

dence, by mandates to the great council of the country, by selection for high offices of public trust, by the commission to regulate the affairs, to guide the high destinies of the people among whom they live. (Applause.) **THAT IS THE ARISTOCRACY AND THE ONLY ARISTOCRACY WHICH IS SUITED TO OUR DAY AND COUNTRY.** Now, Mr. Chairman, you will find it, I think, not unreasonable upon an occasion like this, promoted by the Young Men's Liberal Club, that I should make some reference to the more especial

FUNCTIONS DEVOLVING ON THE YOUNG LIBERALS

in the promotion of the Liberal interests. I am not myself a believer in any class distinctions between a young and an old Liberal. I hope there are senses in which the longer a man is a Liberal the better Liberal he is. (Hear, hear.) But I know there is a tendency, a natural tendency, on the part of Liberals who have lived so long and been so fortunate in their career as to have seen the accomplishment of what was in early days the ultimate limit of their hopes, to believe that the accomplishment of those hopes has for them pretty well settled the question of Liberalism and Reform, there is a disposition to rest content with the realization of the aims for which they have laboured so long and looked so earnestly. But, Sir, this will not do. We must keep our eyes lifted up; we must remember that we are climbing the hill-tops of time; we must perceive that, as we mount higher, fresh horizons and new prospects are opening before us; we must realize that "new occasions bring new duties;" we must strive to help forward that which, unattainable before, may yet be now attained. In this effort we may be helped by the Young Liberals, who have not yet seen the realization or even the near approach of their patriotic hopes, but who in the freshness of life look to and brace themselves for further conquests. Let me remind them, however, that many of these problems are of a difficult character; that they require deep study of the past; substantial acquisition of the principles underlying the course of human affairs, as evidenced by that past; and thorough sifting and full discussion before finally reaching conclusions. That process is the only way to reach right conclusions. Let me remind them further that it is only by degrees that the minds of the masses will receive and accept new and large proposals, and that those who undertake the work of propagandism must expect some considerable interval between the sowing of the seed and the reaping of the harvest. **TO THE YOUNG LIBERALS, TOO, WE MAY LOOK, IN THE SPIRIT OF GENEROUS YOUTH, TO TAKE ENLARGED AND ELEVATED VIEWS WITH REFERENCE TO THE DUTIES OF THE POLITICIAN,** leading them to abhor all clandestine and unworthy intrigues, to denounce and put down all attempts at bribery and corruption and undue and improper practices, whether at elections or in Parliament. They

have not been stimulated as yet by the undue and often criminal zeal of party to engage in those practices which were formerly so rife and which are not yet, I am sorry to say, extinct; and we may hope that, just entering upon their political career, they will take care to conduct political contests in the spirit to which I have referred. May I be allowed to say that I am well persuaded that in the discharge of those political duties, which I rejoice to see they are undertaking in a spirit so earnest and so active, they will take care not to be led away by the

DEVICES OF THE ENEMY.

Those devices are palpable and transparent. The Tory party feels that the issues present and pressing upon us, issues which arise very largely out of the contrast between their pledges and promises and their practices and their performances, are very dangerous issues for them. They would like to blink those issues. They would like to lead us away, they constantly ask us to come away to something else and something different. They declare that the Reform party has no policy. **THE REFORM PARTY FOR THE LAST SIX YEARS DURING WHICH I HAVE HAD THE HONOUR TO LEAD IT, HAS HAD AN ALTERNATIVE POLICY WITH REFERENCE TO ALMOST EVERY IMPORTANT AND DISPUTABLE PROPOSITION BROUGHT FORWARD BY THE TORIES.** With reference to the Canadian Pacific Railway; to the system of settlement and administration of the affairs of the great North-West; to the independence of Parliament; to the relations between the Dominion and the Provinces; to the fishery and reciprocity negotiations; to the scale of expenditure; to the increase of our load of debt; to the tariff system; with reference to the plan of our taxation; to the license legislation; to the Franchise legislation; to the encroachments on Provincial Rights; and to many other questions with which the Tories have dealt in the last six years, we have shown from year to year, from session to session, not only good grounds why their propositions should not receive your assent, but also that there was a better and more excellent way to which we pointed, but in which they refused to follow us. Now, when the period arrives at which we are once again to appeal to the people, they would be very glad if the Reform party, or any portion of that party, were to put to one side as minor matters, as unconsidered trifles, as things not now to be seriously discussed, their own failures, and the respective policies of the two parties on these questions, and the melancholy contrast between their promises, professions, and pledges, and their practice and performance in these matters; their lamentable blunders, and their gross betrayals of duty; and were to say, "There is nothing to fight about in respect of these things." They would be delighted if the people of the country at large would agree with that view,

would treat these all as "dead issues," as they call them; would give them a discharge in full in respect of these sins of omission and commission, and would agree that the Tories were entitled to receive a renewal of the confidence of the people of the country, unless the Reform party should produce some other and some fresh reasons why they should be deprived of that confidence. But this will not do; they are to be tried on these questions, and on these questions they are to be condemned.

But the Reform party, besides discharging the plain and obvious duty of pointing out what was wrong in the Tory policy, and of presenting an alternative policy on these subjects, has also indicated certain important

CHANGES, IMPROVEMENT, AND REFORMS

which it believes to be practicable, in the public interest, and ripe for execution. I referred to some of these in my speech to-day; the questions of the reform of the Senate by making it elective; of the right (subject to securities for the Provinces) to amend our own constitution; of the right to make our own commercial treaties with other nations,—(cheers)—a matter of great moment as to our relations with the U. S. and other countries; of the definition, maintenance, and establishment upon a firmer basis of our local liberties and Provincial rights (renewed cheering); of extradition arrangements, and of copyright; of civil service reform, by the introduction of the principle of merit instead of patronage as the key to office; of the superannuation abuse under which \$150,000 a year net of the public moneys are being paid every year as pensions to civil servants, after paying them adequate salaries during the period of their service. (Loud cheers.) We have proposed reform also in the system of STATE AIDED AND UNDULY FORCED IMMIGRATION, under which such miserable results have been attained, under which such gross jobbery has grown and flourished, which seems to have done some harm and little good, and which has involved such a waste of money. We propose to revert to the Provincial franchises and voters' lists, as more consistent with the federal principle, simpler and more economical, more likely to give due expression in Parliament to the mind of each Province, than any Dominion franchise; but we propose, if there is to be a Dominion franchise, a more constitutional method of making the lists, and a simpler franchise. I do not wish to force my views on any other Province, but, my opinion is that

THE BEST DOMINION FRANCHISE THAT CAN BE DEvised IS RESIDENTIAL REGISTERED MANHOOD SUFFRAGE;

and I am for the principle, "One man, one vote." We propose also to restore the independence and respectability of Parliament

by rendering impossible the continuance of the shocking state of affairs partly developed last session; a state of affairs which has shocked the community and should of itself ensure the condemnation of the Government. I have not time to carry on the catalogue; I must pass to another point. There are important questions which are coming up in the near future, which are almost present and at our doors—some of which may become party questions, others which may be best dealt with otherwise. Among such questions I may name

THE TEMPERANCE QUESTION,

in respect of which the Reform Government of Mr. Mackenzie did what it believed to be its duty, and undertook, at a fitting season, the responsibility of proposing a measure which was believed to be the best adapted to the public opinion of the day. At that time those interested in the temperance question pressed, and pressed earnestly on the Reform Government that it was their duty, as they had the power, to legislate. The Tory party then pressed the same view. Since that time it has appeared, as almost always happens in the train of a great statute, that whether by unhappy interpretations or diversity of meaning to which the language was fairly open, or by oversight, practical difficulties exist in the working of that Act, and for some years efforts, I regret to say abortive, have been made to procure a remedy for these practical difficulties. But the Government now in power has not undertaken the duty of introducing or even of facilitating the amendatory legislation necessary to give effect to the declared intentions of Parliament and the people, in the same manner in which the Government of Mr. Mackenzie undertook the discharge of the duty incumbent upon them when they were in office; nor, I must say, have I observed the same pressure put on the Tories which was put on the Reformers in this regard. THE QUESTION, HOWEVER, HAS ADVANCED. It has assumed still larger proportions, and in its wider phase of to-day it now presses on our minds. I hope and believe the Young Liberals will be formed very largely on the side of temperance. Again there looms up, ever nearer, the great question of our national future. And connected with this are various other questions of great magnitude. There is also THE QUESTION OF THE RELATIONS OF LABOUR TO CAPITAL, a vast subject now calling for our earnest thought. Now, as I understand it, the formation of the Liberal party here, as in Britain, is an open formation; we march in loose order with open ranks.

WE ARE THE PARTY OF PROGRESS,

and we recognize that included within our ranks are many whose

pace is different from the pace of others. Some there will always be in the party who will move at the head, the advanced guard, who see or think they see further than the rest, who project their minds into a more distant future, and look, long before the time at which it can be garnered in, for the harvest to be reaped some other day—who sow the seeds which are to produce that harvest. Then you find the main body going steadily onward, dealing mainly with those things which after due ripening have become questions of the day—problems in practical politics. Then you find an efficient and important part of the army in the rear guard, composed of those who, while alive to the true principles of Liberalism, yet rather emphasize the importance of making haste slowly, in whom caution is often the prominent element, who steady us in our course, put on the brakes and prevent us from going too fast or getting at loose ends. These, I say, form a valuable and important element in that composition which makes our party an effective instrument for accomplishing the public good, and they must not be undervalued. A party of progress which does not believe that the prime function of man is to stand still until forced to move on or move out, which believes in the spread of Liberal doctrine and the development of Liberal views, must make up its mind to find within its ranks considerable differences of opinion consistently with concurrence in the general principles, and with concurrence in the general views taken on such questions as have reached a state in which they can be worked out in practical legislation, or in agitation for that practical legislation. *I am sure, then, that we shall find our discussions and our affairs conducted upon principles of comprehension and toleration, and not of ostracism or exclusion.* So it has been in my time, and so it shall be so long as I have any power to direct the movements of the party. (Loud cheers.) I have never justified to myself or my supporters a single vote upon the ground that it was the party view. I believe our votes are to be justified to ourselves and to our own consciences—(cheers)—and, therefore, I have never asked a friend or supporter of mine in Parliament to give a single vote contrary to what, after due consideration, he believed to be his conscientious duty. (Loud applause.) I respect the man who undertakes the difficult and weakening task of giving a vote opposed to the general feeling and opinion of his party. I feel that he has done an act which is a credit to him, and that he is none the less a friend of the party because he may find himself occasionally constrained to vote some other way. (Loud cheers.) That is the spirit in which I think electors should treat their representatives, and in which we should treat our brother members of the party; and, depend upon it, so treating them, they will not forget that they have a responsibility to themselves and to you to be faithfully discharged.

Now, while such is our position, I understand it is

THE DUTY OF THE LEADER

to be, as far as possible, the leader of the whole party, and not of any section. It is a part of his duty to collect the common sense, and to ascertain what I may call the average condition of party opinion upon the public questions of the day; so far as consists with individual freedom of thought to guide, while he is himself acted on by that opinion; to take care that that average opinion so settled is effectually represented, and pressed forward in Parliament, upon the platform and by the press; and to secure as far as he can, that the party which he has the honour of conducting, retains and increases its efficiency as a powerful instrument for promoting good Government and reform in the country which he serves. Therefore his duty is entirely different from that of the independent member, who has the privilege, which I confess to you, as a leader, I have envied him more than once, of indulging in speculative discussions in reference to topics as to which the leader's duty may yet require, in the condition of party and public opinion, a judicious reticence at the moment, in order to his utterance being made at the time and under the circumstances when it may be most effective. IT HAS BEEN WELL SAID THAT NO LEADER COULD SUCCEED WHO SHOULD BE CALLED ON AT ALL TIMES TO FORMULATE OPINIONS ON ALL POSSIBLE QUESTIONS. For him as for others there is a time to speak and a time to be silent. It is no secret that I had rather be freer than I am, but being as I am I accept the recognized and inevitable limitations of my position, and act as best I can within them. I believe this is the principle on which alone the party business can be conducted. (Applause.) At the same time I hold myself free sometimes to speak and act in my individual capacity; though this is a freedom to be exercised with reserve. Now I wish to call the attention of Liberals, especially Young Liberals, to the fact that there are before us many practical pressing questions—among them, and chief among them, this, whether upon the whole array of the pledges and professions, practices and performances of the men in power as compared with each other, and with those of the Liberal party, it is not a prime duty of ours to set these contrasted statements before the people, and so to ensure that diminution and loss of the public confidence on the part of our opponents which must result from such a process. Our business is to change the Government of this country, as the only effective method of procuring a change in the methods of Government and reform in the principles of Government. I have pointed out some questions with which we have to deal; one of the most important is the great question of the preservation of the

INDEPENDENCE, INTEGRITY, AND RESPECTABILITY OF THE COMMONS
HOUSE OF PARLIAMENT.

(Cheers.) To the Young Liberals we may look for zealous, energetic work to set before the public, not only before their friends and fellow-Liberals, but before all thinking men, the true principles which should affect a democracy like ours as to the relations between members of Parliament and the Executive and the public treasury. It is one of the excellencies of our country that the condition of our people is not one of very great extremes. There is amongst us, speaking in the large sense, neither poverty nor riches. You find a very few who are possessed of a great superabundance of this world's goods, but large masses—larger in proportion, I believe, than in any other country in the world—possessed of that which through their own exertions furnishes them with a respectable competence for themselves and their families while they are able to labour, and the means for a maintenance in the period of old age and infirmity. *It is important to us to be able to choose our representative men from amongst those who are not possessed of great wealth or an absolute independence.* I would be very sorry indeed if we were to establish a practical plutocracy, and to say that we must look for members of Parliament only amongst those who through their fathers or by long exertion, or through some great good fortune and success, had become wealthy men. (Applause.) I object to that view. But, while we object to that view, we must not forget the failings of human nature; we must not forget that public men so circumstanced are exposed to greater temptations than in an old and rich country, in which you find hardly a member of Parliament who is not what we would call a very wealthy man. Therefore we must set up all the more strongly and observe all the more rigidly

THE STANDARDS OF THE PUBLIC VIRTUE.

We must do so, because the temptations are greater and more obvious, and it behoves the Liberal party in particular, but the people at large also, to see that these standards are set up, and being set up, are observed. (Cheers.) *Nor is it possible that such relations as have now been established between certain members of the Commons and the Executive can be suffered to exist by the general approval of the people, without breaking down such poor guarantees for independence of thought, and for the conscientious consideration of public questions, as at present theoretically exist.* This is one of the tasks imminently pressing upon us. But consistently with all this kind of work, the Liberals who entertain views with reference to questions not yet ripe for action have not

merely the right, they have the duty laid upon them, to bring forward those views. (Loud applause.) I HAVE CLAIMED IN OLD DAYS FOR MYSELF AND MY FELLOW-LIBERALS THE GREATEST LIBERTY OF THOUGHT AND ACTION in this regard. I prefer to see those who entertain new views, even though I may not share them, bring them forward. (Applause.) Let them come into the fresh, free, open light of day, and if they have merit they will thrive and grow, and if they have not merit they will be set to one side, will wither and die. (Loud cheering.) That is the process by which we shall reach the truth, and therefore *we ought to encourage rather than disparage the discussion of the suggestions, the schemes of supposed improvement and reform, which may be brought forward, even though we differ from them.* Let us state our differences and thresh out the questions, and so reach sound conclusions. That is the true method by which we shall in the end reach union upon questions of importance which may not now be ripe for action. (Loud cheers.) But I repeat the suggestion I made a few moments ago—

WE MUST TAKE CARE NOT TO BE LED AWAY BY THE TORIES FROM
THE PRACTICAL PRESENT QUESTIONS

which show the line of demarcation between the parties, and upon which the election is to be fought, into some new issues which they are always inviting us to raise, in order that there may be some cloud of dust in which they may escape from their own record, and so, if possible, beguile the people into giving them a fresh verdict of approval. (Cheers.) In this sense, Mr. Chairman, and I believe it is no ignoble sense, I am a practical politician, because I want to deal with the practical politics before the people of this country at this day, with the issues we have before us, which are weighty enough, goodness knows, for the attention of a free people, and which some even say to me are embarrassing to deal with because they are so numerous. Let us not forget these practical present issues. (Cheers.) Give no advantage to the enemy. Let us, as we approach the period of the elections, close our ranks, advance our forces, push the enemy upon every favourable occasion from the indefensible positions which they have occupied for the last eight years, and press on those issues upon which the party is agreed, on which the party, as a party, is united, which it has made its platform of present practical reforms; and so acting and uniting, not forgetting the future, but dealing mainly with the present, which is the important thing as far as action is concerned, I believe we shall at no distant day march to a great, a glorious, and, I hope, a lasting victory. (Loud and prolonged cheering).

A PROGRESSIVE POLICY.

Reply to the Welland Young Liberals.

Response to their Promise of Active Work—The Tories' Anxiety to have their own Record Overlooked—The Parrot Cry, "Where is Your Policy"—The Liberal Programme of Reform.

At Welland Mr. BLAKE said:—I turn to the address of the Young Liberal Clubs of the county. I thank the Young Liberals for their kindness, and though I have no longer a title to be enrolled in their ranks, I yet feel a deep and earnest interest in the progress and prosperity of Young Liberalism. I am an old enough Liberal myself to have three staunch young Liberals in my household bearing my name, and on their behalf, as well as my own, I tender hearty greetings to their friends and colleagues, the Young Liberals of Welland. (Cheers.) I join in their congratulations on the condition of the Liberal party in Canada, and thank them for

THEIR PROMISE OF AID AND CO-OPERATION

to secure success in the coming contest. (Loud and prolonged applause.) They recognize, I trust, that in order to that success sacrifice is essential. They recognize, I trust, that the expenditure of time, of energy, and of labour is essential in order that they may accomplish the public good which they set before them. (Applause.) We must take care that with these new forces that are becoming day by day more and more prominent and numerous in our ranks, such an organization takes place in the Liberal party as never took place before. (Cheers.) You must take care that all legitimate efforts are made to sway to our side every neutral man, to animate with earnestness every indifferent man, and to convert all those on the other side of politics, who are not altogether blinded to the cause of justice and of truth. (Great cheering.) You must take care our organization is so complete that when the time of polling comes, every available vote shall be polled; and if you do these things, I share your hope and your expectation that amongst the signal triumphs which are to be announced at the close of polling day at the next Dominion election will be "Welland redeemed!" (Tremendous cheering.) Now I wish to say a word or two to my young friends with reference to a Tory cry raised for a long time past, and which still rings throughout the land,

" WHERE IS YOUR POLICY ?"

We have been expounding our policy year in and year out for a long time back. For months past I have been speaking very constantly, and in every speech I have made, I have stated one or more important political propositions forming part of the policy of the Liberal party. *But the parrot cry is repeated still ; and it will be repeated constantly, for want of a better.* (Cheers and laughter.) The Tories are very anxious to escape from criticism of their policy and their conduct, and that is one of the reasons why they are always raising this cry. (Cheers.) Talk to an audience about what they, who are entrusted with the conduct of affairs and with power to mould the policy and legislation of the country, have done, talk to an audience about what they have failed to do, talk to an audience about

THEIR PROMISES, PLEDGES, AND PREDICTIONS,

and contrast them with the sad results of their rule ; the Tories hear it all impatiently, they turn away and call out, " Where is your policy ?" They are—and I do not blame them for it, it is very natural—they are extremely anxious to get away from the consideration of their own record and from the question whether upon that record they ought to be approved or condemned. (Cheers.) Now, let me deal with this cry for a little. First of all let me point to you that both here and in England *the tendency has long been to confine to the Ministry of the day all the important legislation*, and it has long been found almost impossible for a private member, no matter what his ability, zeal, or energy, to carry any great measure affecting the general interests of the country. Let me remind you that that duty has been both here and in England thrown on the Government ; so that it is said in England that the duty of an Opposition is confined principally to conducting a critical examination of the affairs of the country. It has been said by a great English statesman that this is the most important duty devolving upon the members of Parliament under the present system. England has had centuries of legislation, and there is now a large body of laws in force under which that country might continue to flourish without any amendment being made to the bulk of them for some time—though some important laws of theirs, in my opinion, require early amendment. We, in Canada, have received from England, and from France to some extent, the advantage of the legislation of both those great countries ; and our affairs could be carried on, and our material progress would not be impeded if we had, as to the main body of our laws, no amendatory legislation for some time ; though here, as in

England, there are several important laws, as for example, to give one single instance, the Temperance Act, which in my opinion require early amendment. But, however this may be, in the consideration of public affairs, questions continually arise whether the Government have been wise or unwise, careful or negligent, prudent or imprudent, honest or dishonest, extravagant or economical, long-sighted or short-sighted, promise-breakers or promise-keepers; whether they have conducted the affairs of the country correctly or incorrectly in matters in regard to which an educated people keep, or ought to keep, a steady eye on the action of its representatives in Parliament. In regard to these things, ladies and gentlemen, it is

THE DUTY OF THE OPPOSITION,

a duty which the Opposition I lead has performed without factiousness but with firmness, to criticise the conduct of the Administration of the day and to strive to secure that what it does is for the best interests of the country. In a word, the normal function of an Opposition of this day is mainly critical. The Administration acts or proposes, the Opposition criticises; and on our relative attitude and performances we confidently ask your verdict. (Cheers.) But some time ago I pointed out at Owen Sound and elsewhere that *for the last six years we had not merely criticised, we had also suggested; that we had proposed an alternative policy on each of the important questions submitted*, as for instance the Canadian Pacific Railway, the tariff, the North-West, and other great affairs. I see that Mr. Thompson, the Minister of Justice, has,

WITH GREAT PAINS AND LABOUR,

constructed something which I fancy he imagines is a joke on this word alternative—(laughter)—and that he is making various meetings melancholy with this elaborate performance. I won't waste words on it. I do not think that his jokes are very laughable, but I have rather enjoyed some of his so-called facts and arguments. (Laughter.) They, indeed, are somewhat comic, and show some perhaps unconscious sense of humour, as well as some power of invention. So I hope he will dispense with these saddening efforts at premeditated merriment, and rather amuse his friends with what he calls his solid facts and his serious arguments. (Laughter.) Now, I do not deal to-day—I have done so often—with this alternative policy. I want to show you that we have not confined ourselves to criticism, or even to the suggestion of an alternative policy on Government questions. We have brought before the country large

QUESTIONS OF POLICY AND REFORM.

Let me touch on some of these very briefly. *We have advocated a reformed Senate*, small in numbers, with declared and appropriate functions, elected by and responsible to the people at large—(cheers)—*an independent Commons*, free from enervating and degrading contact with the public treasury and the public domain—(cheers)—*an enlarged and simplified franchise*, conformable in each Province to the views and circumstances of that Province, with lists made by the local authorities, and to be exercised in districts fairly divided, so as to produce a really representative assembly—*an honest and efficient Executive*, dealing with the people's business fairly, justly, promptly, and on business principles, keeping promises, redressing grievances, and so preventing rebellion in the west and discontent in the east—(cheers)—*a check to the progress of monopoly* fostered by this Government in so many aspects, in transportation, in land, in manufactures—*a reform in the Civil Service*, embracing as far as may be appointments by merit, promotions by merit, a fair day's work for a fair day's pay by a reduced and efficient staff, and *the abolition of the present superannuation system*—(applause)—the obtaining of the constitutional right to *make our own commercial arrangements* through our own responsible agents—(cheers)—*economy and retrenchment in the public expenditure*—a check to the alarming increase which has taken place, and a relief from the people's growing burdens—such a *reduction of taxation as past extravagance allows*—such a *readjustment as shall make it bear more equitably and less oppressively*—*a reduction of sectional taxes, and of taxes on prime necessities and raw materials*, and a *diminution of the injustice inflicted by the specific system* on the poor, as between them and the rich, in respect to goods of varying qualities and values—(applause)—*an earnest effort to promote reciprocal trade*—(great applause)—and to *improve the relations between us and our neighbours* on the fishery as well as on other questions—*the full and practical recognition of the federal character of our constitution*—*an end of disallowance of local laws affecting purely local matters*, and not gravely touching Dominion interests—(cheers)—no more disallowance of Streams bills—(applause)—no more attempts to seize escheats—no more efforts to pass license laws—(renewed cheering)—no more struggles to strip provinces of their lands and jurisdictions—

NO MORE SEIZING OF PROVINCIAL RAILWAYS—

no more centralization—but a *full and frank recognition of Provincial autonomy*, home rule, and our system of large local

liberties—(loud and prolonged applause)—an earnest effort to adjust prominent grievances, and to settle on fair terms the questions between the Provinces and Territories and the Dominion—justice to all, special favours to none—*fair consideration to all in respect of past railway expenditures*, and an effort to settle finally the financial relations of the provinces to Canada—*an end to jobbery and corruption*—(loud applause)—*abolition of the system of assisted immigration*—(renewed applause)—and a reduction to a small amount of the enormous expenditure under that head. Beyond all this, we press for a determination to *put down the divisive forces of race and creed*—(cheers)—for a refusal to divide upon these fatal issues—for the cultivation of the spirit of Canadian brotherhood, and Canadian nationality; and this by the observance of the great rules of eternal justice and equal rights, and of the fundamental principles of civil and religious liberty, and by the practice, on the part of the various majorities to be found in the several Provinces, of these principles exemplified in liberality, tolerance, and *even generosity on the part of the strong towards the weak*. (Cheers.) Again, we plead for a *continuous and sustained effort to elevate the moral condition of the people*, the creation of a condition of thought and feeling which shall forward all good causes,

THE CAUSES OF HONESTY AND UPRIGHTNESS,

of *morality and temperance*, and may in due time enable the forces of law and regulation to work in new spheres hand-in-hand with those of morality and religion for the advancement of the race. (Loud cheers.) With these objects before us, and with the black results of Tory misgovernment so plain on every hand, may we not confidently appeal to all good men, to all lovers of their country, and, above all, to the young men of Canada, to join our forces and aid in the triumph of our cause? (Loud and prolonged cheering.)

THE FUNCTIONS OF THE OPPOSITION.

SIR J. MACDONALD'S CRITICISMS—HIS OWN AUTHORITY.

At Oakwood Mr. BLAKE said:—At Welland, replying to the Young Liberals' address, I discussed the functions of a constitutional Opposition, as now developed. I showed that they were

largely critical; and that on the Government largely devolved the duty of legislation. I also showed that we had presented an alternative policy to that of the Government, and that we had laid before the country a large and comprehensive programme and policy of reform.

Since then Sir J. Macdonald and his Ministers have referred to and misrepresented my statement.

Sir John said at Aylmer:—

Mr. Blake had announced that it was not the duty of the Opposition to have a policy; but was it likely that the Liberal-Conservative party in Opposition in 1878, would have been in office to-day if it had accepted a dictum like that laid down by Mr. Blake? No.

At Wingham he said:—

Mr. Blake had himself announced that the Opposition ought not to have a policy—that it was simply their duty to carp and find fault.

His subordinates have followed his lead: and are raising the hue and cry against me, well trained as they are to the work.

Now,

I DID NOT SPEAK WITHOUT FULL CONSIDERATION,

nor without reference to the experience of late years, both in England and Canada. I did not speak only on inferences drawn by myself. I found my views corroborated by a high authority. In truth the views of that high authority were much stronger than mine. I could not adopt them to the full. But I conjectured that Sir John Macdonald and the Tory party would be likely to find fault with my statement, and therefore I took the recorded views of that high authority, and I made them the substratum of my speech—enlarging, to suit my own opinions, the functions of Opposition, diminishing, to suit my own opinions, the functions of Government; but still in the main agreeing with that high authority.

Now, refer if you please to what I said at Welland; and compare it with

THE LANGUAGE OF HIGH AUTHORITY,

to which I refer. This is that language:—

“Both here and in England the tendency had been to confide to the Ministry of the day all important legislation, and it had been found almost impossible for a private member, no matter what his ability might be, or what might be his zeal or industry, to carry any great measure affecting the general interests of the country. That duty had been both in England and in this country, thrown upon the Government, so that it was said in England that the duty of an Opposition was confined principally to conducting a criti-

cal examination into the administration of the affairs of the country. It had been said by a great Liberal of that country that this was the most important duty thrown upon the members of Parliament under the present system. England had had centuries of legislation, and there was now a large body of laws in force under which the country, without any amendment being made to them for a series of years, could continue to flourish. So in this country : we had received from England and from France the advantage of all the legislation of both these great countries, and the affairs of Canada could be carried on, and the material progress of the country not be impeded if we had no new legislation for several years, such had been the advantage we had gained from a long series of laws well-considered and successfully operated. But in the consideration of public affairs, questions continually arose whether the Government had been wise or unwise, prudent or imprudent, whether they had conducted the affairs of the country correctly or incorrectly in matters in regard to which an educated country kept a steady eye upon the action of its representatives in Parliament, and in regard to which it was the duty of the Opposition—a duty which the Opposition in this House would perform without factiousness, but with firmness—to criticise the conduct of the Administration of the day, and see that what it did was for the best interests of the country."

• You will see that these words cover, and far more than cover, all I said ; that I was unable to go so far as the language of my high authority.

But you may say to me,

WHO IS YOUR HIGH AUTHORITY ?

What do we care for your authority ?

Well, I admit you Reformers may perhaps not pay very much deference to my authority.

But I think the Tories should—at any rate, *I think Sir John Macdonald should respect it—for my authority is himself*. No less, and no more !

He used these words in the House of Commons in 1877, after three or four years of Opposition, as descriptive of the duty of an Opposition, and of the course of the Tory Opposition to Mr. Mackenzie !

It is his own authority he has despised and ridiculed ; it is his own language he has eaten ; mine enemy hath written a book, and out of his own lips have I condemned him ! (Cheers and laughter.)

(5)